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# TWENTIETH CENTURY EVANGELISM

By

Raymond Edward Wilder

A.B., Pomona College 1928

A.M., Pacific School of Religion 1930

Thesis

Submitted in the Department of

Church Administration and Social Service

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Bachelor of Divinity

in

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A psychological study of the function of evangelism for twentieth century Christianity, both in the life of an individual and in the practice of the church.

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Rich with inspiration and suggestions, for both pastor and people, in the formulating of an effective practical program of personal evangelism for any church.

Garrison, W. E. "Affirmative Religion." 1928.

Clear in its discussion of the transition of Christianity from its beginning until today, though a point of view rather than detailed facts.

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Good for understanding the varied expression and practice of religion in life.

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An article in the Methodist Review (bimonthly), March and April, dealing with the psychology of an individual awakening to the Divinity within himself-- mixture of conservatism and modernism.

Kernahan, A. E. "Visitation Evangelism." 1925.

Fine in its technique of making personal contacts in an effective program of evangelism.

Pratt, J. B. "Religious Consciousness." 1920.

For understanding the function and practice of religion in any individual life.

Zahniser, C. R. "Casework Evangelism." 1925.

Though very conservative in his use of terms, Zahniser has presented a very adequate discussion of the function of religion for individuals, and an evangelistic technique for fulfilling that function.

# Chapter I.

## Introduction.

"I have been greatly interested in the approach to the entire subject of practical evangelism,, because I have for a long time been convinced that the church worker and the social reformer need to acquaint themselves with all phases of human need, taking into account all possible factors of heredity, and home surroundings, and employment, and especially the conditions which go with housing, and companions, and religious or minus-religious training."

C. M. Sheldon.
"Caseowrk Evanggelism."
C. R. Zahniser.
Introduction.

"Some earnest, but indiscriminating souls, when they see some evangelistic method of former times no longer effective, begin to wonder whether the old Gospel has lost its power or the modern church its candle-stick. Sometimes also the same sort of thinking leads to criticism of new evangelistic methods, as though those performing them were throwing discredit on the religion of their fathers. None of these would occur, if the people realized that the same psychological principles applied to evangelism which have occasioned much greater changes and readjustments on the part of other enterprises--and that, too, without causing any anxiety to those promoting them." (C.R.Z.:I.)

For eight years, I have been gradually awakening, through personal experiences and opinions of others, to the recognition of the inadequacy of Christian evangelism as practiced in mass revivals by means of sensational emotionalism. At least, the method has seemed inefficient for twentieth century conditions and needs, immature for present Christian civilization, and unadapted for the progress of the local church, the welfare of the community, and the enlargement and enrichment of Christianity.

In the spring of 1923, I had the privilege of enjoying personal contact with the English evangelist, Gipsy Smith, during one of his many revivals in this country. The personality of the man and the sincerity of his message were, in deed, an inspiration. But, the total and final effect of the meetings was a feeling of dissatisfaction--dissatisfaction, not with the man nor with his message, but with the method of "impressing" this message upon others. The feeling of emotional pressure was repelling, particularly because of the

uncertain clarity of the life-vision if accepted. At the close of this series of meetings, the report was that ten thousand conversions had been made (undoubtedly based on the number of decision* cards signed). I remember many who had signed cards, but they were already church members. Further, there were those who signed whose sincerity I had full reason to question.

Two years later, I had similar experiences in another series of evangelistic meetings. In 1927 after preliminary studies in psychology, I made several visits for observation to a certain church in Los Angeles where similar practices of sensational emotionalism were in constant usage--then I began to really understand my emotional negations to such evangelism. Soon afterwards, there were those among my acquaintances who were believers in and subjects to this emotionalism (so-called religion)--further and more personal enlightenment was possible. From then on, I have sought for a meaning and practice of Christian evangelism that was real, vital, permanent, and wholesome.

After these eight years of personal reactions and observations, and, just recently, after eight months of study from both life and books (the specificly useful books for the following discussion being listed in the Bibliography), I have arrived at a conception of Christian evangelism for the twentieth century that is personal in both function and application. The local church should grow from within through the activities of its own pastor and members; it should achieve its numerical enlargement and spiritual enrichment through serving individual needs; and it will achieve these results if its program of evangelism is adapted to local conditions and needs, is operated in a thorough knowledge of the ways and means for personal work, and is continually inspired by the Spirit of Christ for the Kingdom of God on earth. Let us glimpse in the following pages some of the basic principles which would serve as a sufficient foundation for an effective program for twentieth century evangelism, for the increase of Christ in the hearts of individuals, for the increase in the effectiveness of the church, for the spiritual fulfillment of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

## Chapter II.

## EVANGELISM IN TRANSITION

"Happy is the preacher whose messages are adapted to his time; adapted in the sense that they interpret the needs of those times in terms of the Gospel and they bring forth out of the Gospel just that which meets the needs disclosed. He is the true prophet."

C. R. Zahniser.
Chapter I.

"If we are thinking of this world as a wilderness of woe that is not our home, and of ourselves as commissioned to keep crying, "save ourselves from this unto regeneration", we will make one kind of a program of service. But, if we are thinking that "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved"; if we are thinking of ourselves as called of God to fellowship with His Son in establishing here on earth the Kingdom of God; if we are thinking of the values of the Gospel, we urge upon others, in terms first of all of how we will enrich their lives here on earth and make their daily living in every way more worthwhile; then, we will proceed in a very different way. We will formulate our interpretation of the Gospel in terms of the needs and values as we see them. We will seek for those approaches to people in which we can best arrest attention and interest, through knowing their situations and the yearnings of their hearts. And we

> will try always to follow up their cases till we see the assured fruition of the impotent Divine Unction in lives permanently established on higher levels."
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Chapter I.

Change is ever at work in the universe. Scientific theories change. Forms of government change. We change. So often, change is where we least expect to find it.

> "You remember a school house where the world was at its widest; the fishing stream; the swimming pool; the scramble up the bank with brused feet; the spring at which you used to recline and drink and drink, and drink and drink, and yet you were never satisfied; the spankings wherewith your relatives regaled you that you never got one too many; the chores; the Saturdays; the first indications of spring; the stopping amid fields to see the solemn splendor of a cloud burned low like a great white ship in conflagration."
>
> William A. Quayle.
> "Visitation Evangelism." Ch.XVII.
> A. E. Kernahan.

Although this is not a definition of change, it is an effective description. To Bishop Quayle,

these were the common place things of the past, the humdrum and stupidities of life. Yet, they were the hardy makers of our souls. But now they are gone, never to return again.

Yet, during this change, there is at work one of the deepest instincts of the human soul, so often causing chaos instead of progressive transition. It seems to be characteristic of human nature to search out and tenaciously cling to something that does not change--and, not infrequently, that something is a very personal matter. Since ones religion results (at least in part) from some of the highest aspirations and deepest longings of life, changelessness, for many, becomes a part of their religion; it becomes attached to God, Christ, or Christianity.

But, if there had been only one system of thought, philosophy, or religion that has ever presented a person who is eternally changeless in the qualities that make Him like God; if there has been but one person who has declared Himself through

the centuries to be changeless in the virtues that qualify Him as Divine; if Jesus is remembered, not because He wanted to be, but because there is that in Him which defies oblivion; does this mean, as the reactions of many Christians indicate, that the practice of Christianity cannot change without losing its Spirituality, Idealism, or Divinity? We may realize that the Christian world cannot afford to dispense with the prestige of Jesus' Personality; we may recognize that the redemptive work of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, is as old as human need, and will continue as long as men are mortals; we may feel that none of us has enough moral stamina, enough Spiritual Dynamic, to overcome all temptation and measure up to every responsibility, that there is always need of help from a power other than ourselves, in the world making for righteousness, on which we may draw for Spiritual invigoration; yet, nevertheless, if Christianity is to be Spiritually fulfilled and vitally achieved, we must awake to the changeable practices of the changeless Spirit, Purposes, and Principles of Christ.

Due to the social experiences of the past nineteen hundred years, the conception of Christ has passed through several transformations, each of which has added something to His visible stature and to His moral appeal. The coming of the modern period, with its new emphasis upon the worth and the rights of the individual and upon personal liberty and the free exercise of reason, brought with it the awakening to the inadequacy of the monarchical ideal of society and of the person and dominion of Christ. Christ came to be seen as a reasonable and sympathetic friend rather than an arbitrary ruler. He has increased, even in what seems reduction of Him, to more human terms.

> "Those who are more fully inbued with the modern spirit of free thought and social and religious experimentation are among the first to assert that the Spirit of Christ was never so well understood, even though still too little understood, and never so influencial in practical ways, though still not influencial enough, as it has been since men came to think of Him as a friend rather than a king, and as the giver of a charter of liberty rather than the revealer of immutable laws."
>
> W. E. Garrison.
> Chapter IV.

Measured as metaphysical exaltation, kingly pomp and power, and dominion over the thoughts of servile subjects, the change has been a decreasing Christ. Yet, although the progress is apparently downward, it is morally upward--no longer, a Savior by magical sacramental processes, a revealer of exact statements of theological truth, the head of a perfectly authoritarian church, the giver of a complete code of moral and Spiritual laws; but today, a teacher who is anxious that his pupils should develop independent and resourceful personalities and a capacity for finding truth, a participant in the struggle of life, a fellow and comrade in battle, so rich in wisdom, so clear in insight, so inspiring and helpful that He becomes for us the Spirit of all that is noble and pure and brotherly and in the highest sense social. His Kingdom is the dominance of these ideals, and that Kingdom is increasing as we change through clearer understanding, deeper appreciation, and more Spiritual living. As we have advanced to higher levels of thought and action, we have always found that Christ was there before us leading us on, and only seeming sometimes to impede

the progress of the race because we have so often confused the changelessness of Christ with what ought to have been our changeableness, so often identified Him with our temporal and partial conceptions of Him. As with the Disciples on the road to Emmaus, Christ has walked with us and we have not known Him.

But not only does our conception of Christianity change through richer recognition of Christ; human affairs also change. Men are not always the same. They are always different--different in their situations, their conditions, their outlook, their felt needs, their yearnings. Hence, the method in which the Gospel should be presented, the message itself, must necessarily change constantly. The message should be different at different times and places. Similarly, the method of presenting the Gospel should be adapted to the changing situations and outlook of men.

> "This does not mean a perversion of the Gospel; it means only wise selection from it. None of us can take in all of it, but all of us are

> privileged to take therefrom according to our needs. It is therefore important that the Gospel be presented to every man in terms of the needs of his own life and, to that end, that the worker know something of what those needs are."
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Chapter I.

And so, evangelism, the message and method for spreading the Gospel of Christianity, is in transition. As Christian propaganda, evangelism undertakes to influence human conduct; accordingly, the form of its presentation will have to be different at different times and in confronting different conditions. In other words, since evangelism seeks to secure a change of the entire course of a man's life, there is therefore reason to expect that its form should change according to the conditions of human life confronted.

Let us consider briefly three of the most important factors compelling change in evangelism that we may better understand the trend of the twentieth century transition--conditions under which

men find themselves; the felt needs of men; the new knowledge succeeding generations obtain.

(1) CHANGING CONDITIONS. "Some forty years ago, a cynical wag scribbled on the pillar of a small church: Some come here to show fine clothes, Some come here to meet fine beaux, Some come here to sleep and nod-- A very few to worship God." (Z.Ch.I) But today, relatively few people go to religious meetings except for religious purposes. In this twentieth century, with so many interests crowding in on one and clammering for his time, there is little appeal in providing a place to go, as was so often effective for evangelistic meetings in the past. Folks not seeking to worship God usually go elsewhere. Hence, twentieth century evangelism will have to be done mostly outside of meetings, if it is to fulfill needs for those not already interested. Furthermore, today life everywhere is becoming urban, even in small communities--urban in the sense that ones different contacts are with many different people, often widely scattered. Not many years ago, when many lived in rural districts and small

communities, people had most of their contacts with nearby neighbors, affording the evangelist a sustained contact with them through the neighborhood church. But, we in the twentieth century witness much less of this intimacy of neighborliness.

> "Profusion of literature, new types of recreation, radical changes in home-life, many factors such as these inhering in the conditions under which people find themselves living, affect profoundly all their responses and compel constant changes in the programs of all enterprises that seek to influence their conduct. Evangelism need not expect to be an exception."
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Chapter I.

(2) CHANGING FELT NEEDS. Although some of the felt needs, aspirations, and desires of men are constant and reappear in every ones life, this is not true of all of them. Some that were outstanding in former times are no longer felt, others appear that are new--democracy; freedom; prohibition; Kingdom of God. And since ones appreciation of the Gospel is usually in terms of his own needs which he believes it will satisfy, our evangelism, to be

effective, should in every case present the Gospel in terms of each person's particular felt needs in order to convince him of its worth in his own life. Hence, evangelism will be different as the felt needs are different; it will change as they change.

> "Salvation means: to the drunkard, freedom from the domination of an evil appetite; to the anxious parent, Divine help to rear ones children; to the socially minded, direction and assurance from God in making ones life worthwhile in the world."
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Chapter I.

(3) THE NEW KNOWLEDGE. No one today would think of promoting an educational system that ignored the findings of modern psychology, or the relation of nutrition to mental development. The aims and endeavors of evangelism are also just as directly involved and profoundly affected by the newer knowledge available today. Hence, the particular attention to new techniques.

> "Arrested development, with certain quite clearly defined characteristics of persons of any given mental grade,

> and certain pretty definitely established processes to be followed in dealing with each of them, are now so generally accepted and followed in educational work and other lines of endeavor, that it seems not necessary to more than mention the importance of the same thing being done in evangelism."
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Chapter I.

And so, change is ever at work. Although the spirit, purposes, and principles of Christ may be eternal, we progressively achieve richer recognition, more inspiring interpretations, and more aspiring appreciations for initiating His Kingdom. Although the dynamic of evangelism may be eternal, we use this personal dynamic in accordance with twentieth century conditions, needs, and knowledge. Evangelism is in transition; as the years go by, we more nearly approximate the truth about Christianity.

> "As Christians, we want the best technique of personal service for the help of fellowmen that modern scientific social service has developed, but we want to use it in bring to bear upon these souls the spiritual dynamic assured unto us by Him who said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you." And, we want the fruition of the new life in Christ to be seen in the better conditions of human life. Application of the evangelistic dynamic and the social worker's skill, that is the outstanding need."

## Chapter III.

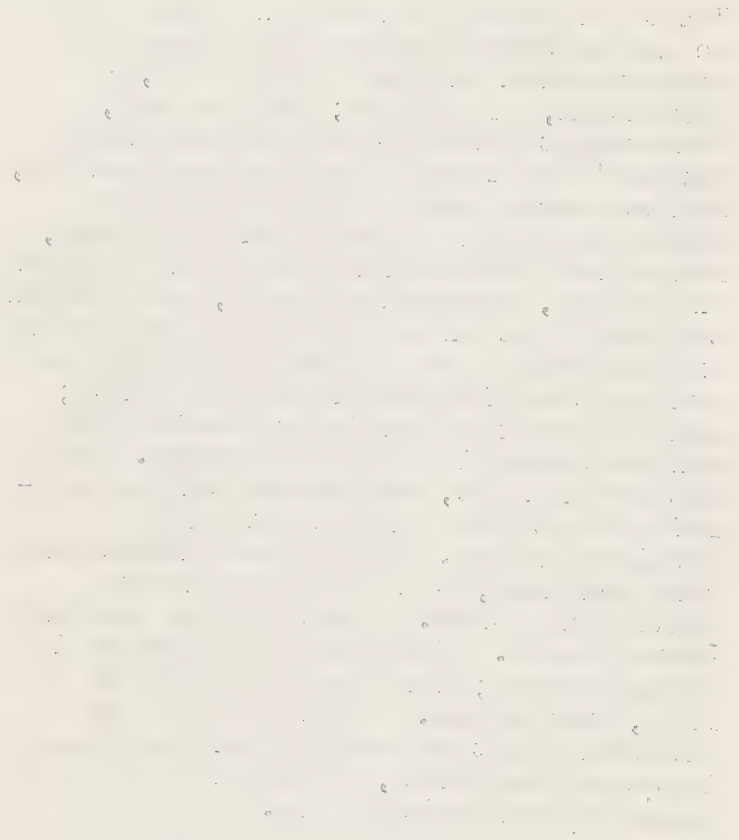
## EVANGELISM IN LIFE

> "The church has been built up by the process of mass evangelism. But wide-spread scientific education and the growing sense of the power of man over nature, together with the resutls of credible criticism of Biblical data and the psychology of religious experience, have caused mass evangelism to cease to operate at all widely. The fundamental reason for its decadence is the wide-spread attainment of man's consciousness of individuality, brought about by many processes working in the life of Christendom. Evangelism, in order to operate successfully, must give its attention to the individual, recognizing the fact that he no longer looks upon himself as a part of a crowd, but as a unit with his individuality intact. If a new form of Spiritual Revelation can replace the old mass evangelism, now so nearly dead, and so continue to provide leven for the lump, all will be well."
>
> C. O. Judkins.

Who was Jesus? Who is Christ? How does He function through evangelism for life? What do we usually do when one from the younger generation asks these questions? So often, nothing! Yet, these people are trying to discover from our conversations whether we actually think that Christ is real. But, how few ever talk about Jesus Christ in regular every day life in any contagious manner! Why?

> "We look into the face of Jesus and we see a beauty there that cannot be comprehended within a sentence, a paragraph, or a book; and we say, "We cannot define Jesus in absolute terms?" We look into His Personality, and we see a power there that has transformed the thought of the ages, renovated the social life and passions of people, changed customs, and let in the sunlight of a wholesome philosophy of life which has already started to set up the Kingdom of God on earth; and we say that it is impossible to define Jesus in absolute terms. As a matter of fact, we cannot define anything that has life in it with absolute terms. Religious creeds are very helpful, but they are never absolutely true. That is the wonder about Jesus. That is the romance in Christianity; for Christianity is life, not creed. Just because we discover that we cannot define Jesus in absolute terms, we should not cease to talk about Him."
>
> A. E. Kernahan.
> Chapter XVII.

Furthermore, we do not insist upon defining many things in terse and explicit sentences which we talk about in a contagious and persuasive way. What is beauty? Somebody says that it is a harmonious relationship of parts. Is that a definition? What is poetry? Somebody says it is the voice of the soul. Is that a definition? We have not yet



been able to define the soul. What is the home? Somebody answers, "Why the home is a house and the man and woman who have been married." Is that a definition? In the words of Kernahan, "You present me with a man and woman who love each other and have been joined together in the Holy bonds of matromony, and you have a home without a house." What is genius? Lincoln was a genius; but there have been scores of books written about him, and the one thing unexplainable is his genius. Yet, do we cease to talk about these indispensible passions of the human race? Do we refuse to accept their contributions to our lives?

> "When I am in the midst of beauty, I drink it in; and that same beauty courses down through my personality, becomes a ministry to the folks. Just because I cannot tell you in explicit terms what poetry is, do I refuse to receive what it has to enrich my life?"
>
> A. E. Kernahan.
> Chapter XVII.

Should we not take the same attitude toward Christ and Christian evangelism through us? Can we not have a practical definition?

Many of the so-called laws of nature were not discovered until some men were willing to pay the price of incarnating them in their own being. Men died for centuries and passed by herbs that had medicinal properties in them that would have cured their diseases, until some doctors gave the health-giving properties contained in them to the world. Just as Newton, Edison, Marconi, and others, are the incarnation of the natural laws, so Christ is the incarnation through us of the Love and Purposes of God. Therefore, since Jesus dramatizes in the most eloquent way the Spiritual Revelations of God, let us achieve the capacity for friendship and acquaintance with this Christ, and find an interpretation of evangelism which will enable us to fulfill most worthily and effectively the Gospel of Christianity for others.

Although we may fully realize that the Kingdom of God waits for the increase of Christ in the hearts of individuals; that Christianity cannot succeed without Christ; that He must be a larger, a more appreciated, a more sublime human Christ;

that He must be a Christ conceived as more interested in the realities of life than in the technicalities of formal religion; that He must be a Christ whose essential character can be seen everywhere embodied in people;--yet, we may find it very difficult to specifically define evangelism. Ask any group of ministers or church workers to define evangelism in brief, and there will likely be as many definitions as there are persons present. This does not arise from the fact that they do not know what evangelism is, but rather from the fact that evangelism is of such variety and richness of content that it has in reality all the meaning which the various definitions give.

Writes Zahniser (Ch.II), "Casework evangelism is distinguished in that it involves the whole of life. It rests on an interpretation of the Gospel which keeps to the fore the sufficiency of that Gospel for every human need and concern of life of our Heavenly Father. It concerns itself with the whole of man, with all of his interests, not merely with his attitude toward Christ and God.

It realizes that the lives of real folks are not segmented into sequested compartments, but that each life must be dealt with as a whole, in which each interest is affected by every other interest. In deed, personal acceptance of Christ may sometimes be the very thing that should not be urged first."

And says C. O. Judkins in the current issue of the Methodist Review (bimonthly), "Evangelism is a life-transforming process which can best be described and explained. Evangelism is not belief, nor does belief evangelize. Evangelism is not knowledge, for a man may know the truth without being freed by it. The way to its accomplishment can be shown, but beyond all teaching, it awaits for the leading of experience. What is Evangelism? It is a life process. It is the process of subjective Spiritual Revelation to the human individual resulting in the birth and growth of his inherited Divinity."

To the first, evangelism is measured in terms of an objective method, to the second by means of a subjective revelation--both parts of an infinite plan!

"The word in reality is like a diamond, and these various definitions are but the flashes from the different faces of the stone." Yet, in practice, the definition should be broad enough to include all those processes and methods by and through which the Spiritual life of the church is renewed. Fagley's definition (Ch.VII) seems sufficiently inclusive: "Evangelism is that type of religious work through which men are brought into touch with God through Christ." Hence, the various forms of educational, pastoral, missionary, or any other type of religious work by and through which the Spiritual life of man is deepened and enlarged--each fulfills an important function in Christian Evangelism.

Under the traditional evangelistic program of the church, there are whole areas of population which are unreached. The boy and girl reared in a Christian home will probably become a Christian, while those coming from non-Christian influences probably will not. This is not to say that the Gospel is not equal to serve the needs of those unreached people; it is only to say that our

evangelism has not been adapted to reach them. Therefore, if we really mean what we say when we talk about a Gospel for every life and for all of life, we must certainly "launch out into the deep", not with a traditional mass evangelism, but with a twentieth century personal evangelism for individual needs.

The present Kingdom theology, a social theology, is compelling us to recast the whole evangelistic program of the church. In this century, we are coming to recognize that ones life courses are the product of the interaction of inner impulses and outward environment, and that both of them are therefore to be subjects of the redemptive process. Our twentieth century evangelistic concern includes both the internal and external relations of life and the adjustments as well. Consequently, there are two things about which we as Christians undertaking to promote the Kingdom of God are concerned--there shall be better people in the world, and there shall be a better world for people to live in. The social theology reveals to us that these two

are dependent upon each other, that neither is attainable if the other is neglected, and that the continuous problem of every ones life is one of adjustment.

> "Throughout life he must adjust himself to his fellowmen in a thousand and one ways. He must adapt himself to living with them whether he wishes to or not, for they are all about him. He must adjust himself to them in ways of getting a living, in relation to their laws and customs, in matters of health, of pleasure, of property rights, of conflict of interests."
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Chapter III.

The best and most enduring service, then, we can render to others, if Christianity is to help them effectively, is in the way of promoting those adjustments which make for wholesome living. Those in trouble are most often people who have not been able to adjust themselves--sometimes to their external environment, sometimes to their internal reactions, sometimes to both. They are in mental conflict, are emotionally unstable, are the prey of impulses and passions. Evangelism must face life.

Since the Gospel of Jesus Christ affords both a way of life and a Spiritual Dynamic to walk in that way, the Christian worker, interested both in the internal and external environments, can come to each life with a confidence that every one who "accepts" it can find therein that "wherewith he can affectively make the adjustments he needs and come into a life of joy and peace."

But to find that help in the Gospel which will be affective in working just the adjustment needed in any particular life is by no means as simple a problem as the traditionalist would have it with his program of redemption through "repentance" and "faith". One of naive, unthinking faith may leave it all to God, urging only a simple surrender, and then in case of failure, attribute it to lack of faith; but, what problems does this naiveness, the fundamental of traditional evangelism, solve? Not infrequently, such naiveness introduces more baffling problems into the situation in place of the helpful service for personal adjustments. The very fact that the same sinful practices arise from

very different causes--some because of mental sub-normalities or conflicts, some because of physical ailments, some because of companions, environment, or improper education--this should reflect the inadequacy of the traditional one-way approach for evangelization, and should further make clear the necessity for a careful study of each life-situation, with helpful service adjusted to what is learned, if the Evangel of Christ is to find its richest fruition in new lives permanently identified with God in Christ.

Thus, the social Gospel leads twentieth century evangelism into programs almost entirely individualistic. It has little to say about the "sinner", much to say about "this sinful man", "that erring girl". We must learn to proceed from the facts of individual lives, not from general assumptions about classes of people.

> "People do not need to be judged half as much as they need to be loved. People do not need to be critized adversely nearly so much as they need to have Christian sympathy."

## Chapter IV.

## EVANGELISM IN THE CHURCH

> "The sooner we realize that for some reason, over nineteen hundred years ago, Jesus took off His body and that the only body that He has to use now which can be seen by those whom we would win is ours, the sooner the Kingdom of God will come upon earth. Your hands may become His hands, your face may smile down into sin and sorrow with the sympathy and Love of Jesus; your heart may become the dynamic which will change many sordid situations. This gives our work a dignity that is beyond compare."
>
> A. E. Kernahan.
> Chapter XVII.

> "There are not two kinds of religion, one for the pulpit and another for the pew, but pastor and people can have a common share in the toil and in the religious reward of Spiritual service."
>
> C. L. Goodell.
> "Parish Evangelism"
> Introduction.

The church is a living body, and its life is directed by some fundamental laws. It must renew its life or die; it must grow from within, from the center of Spiritual life which gives it being and

reality; it must enlarge itself; and its own activity is essential to its growth. Yet, according to Fagley (Ch.I), a survey of the various denominations reveals the fact that approximately one-half of the churches are standing still or declining, that one-third are making a reasonable growth, and that the remaining one-sixth have a sufficient growth. There would seem to be need for "enforcement" of the fundamental laws of the "living" church!

We do not have to look far for both the reason and the necessary solution. A study of the life and work of those effective churches shows that, with few exceptions, each has a definite plan of work. Also, it is the experienceof many churches, which are doing effective work in evangelism (for evangelism is in reality the fulfilling of the fundamental laws of the life of the church), that if the efforts be directed along lines of a well-defined program, the results will be far greater than if the efforts are undirected. In short, the universal testimony of pastors who have used a "program of evangelism" is that it will work; that if the churches

will study how other churches plan and carry through their "programs", and if each church will develop a "program" to suit its own needs and will carry that "program" through in a thorough-going way, the results of Christian evangelism in the twentieth century would be most effective.

> "When a church has decided to commit itself to a thorough-going evangelistic service, it should, first of all, see clearly the need of a program of activity suited to its own life and affective in meeting the needs of the community; and second, it should select, either by pastoral appointment or church election, an evangelistic or membership committee which would help in carrying the program through."
>
> F. L. Fagley.
> Chapter I.

But, what is the purpose of this program of evangelistic service? We feel that the church is organized to enlist men and women in Christian worship and service. True! Nevertheless, when we consider our own church, we are often somewhat hazy in our thinking. We think of it as an institution essential for the development of Christian culture, as an organization in which are germinated all sorts

of worthy community enterprises, or as a place for the presentation of high ideals of Christian duty. Yet, can we stop with these? Not if the church is to live! As essential as are these functions to Christian civilization, the doing of them does not lessen our responsibility of continually vitalizing the church--that we be true to the great foundation principle of its life: the bringing of people into vital relationship with God. And in the fulfilling of this evangelistic responsibility for the twentieth century, it is fundamental that we look upon the church as a growing institution, building in naturally Spiritual ways rather than artificially "supernatural" ways, enlarging its life through the activities of its members, and inspired, not only as to growth, but also as to the direction of its growth by the Spiritual life which gives it reality, vitality, and transcendence.

> "Through a program of parish evangelism, the church sets itself to study its own life and seeks to renew and to expand that life. By so doing, the church, not only enriches the quality of its life, but enlarges its life as well along lines of natural growth."
>
> F. L. Fagley.
> Chapter I.

Whether the program of twentieth century evangelism be termed "Parish Evangelism", "Casework Evangelism", "Visitation Evangelism", "Personal Evangelism", or any other name which expresses a specific method or particular emphasis, all the exponents of the various practices of Christian Evangelism for twentieth century conditions and needs would probably agree: that the goal is the increase of Christ in the hearts of individuals; that the service is helpfulness in the adjustments and achievements of life; that the method is a cooperation of the pastor and people in a program of service for vitalizing the church and Spiritualizing the community--for the achievement of more Christlike personalities in a social Kingdom of God here on earth.

F. L. Fagley tells us (Ch.I) that, in a conference on Parish evangelism of the pastors of a mid-west city, a thorough-going canvas of the membership roll of the churches of that city revealed the fact that there were but five members then living and working in the various churches

of the whole number who were brought into the churches as the result of a Tabernacle revival held eight years earlier. As a rule, it is most difficult to find permanent results a few years, in many cases a few months, after a highly organized, emotional revival. Of course many who unite with the church through its own activities drop by the wayside, but inspite of deaths, removals, and backslidings, the churches show an appreciable growth year by year, and "this renewal of life and growth of the Christian fellowship depend when all is said and done upon the faith and service of pastor and people.

> "There is a very great place for the Tabernacle form of revival or religious work, but its chief result is not the building up of membership of the local congregation. Its ideal more frequently is moral reform."
>
> F. L. Fagley.
> Chapter I.

As a matter of fact, after a survey and thorough study of mass evangelism, Kernahan informs us (Ch.I) that the series of sermons, for the purpose of winning to Christian discipleship those not

reached by regular church work, are preached to crowds ninety-six percent of whom are already Christians; that people are wrought up emotionally, certain psychological advantages are taken, and they are won to the spell of the meeting instead of being won to a clear, intelligent acceptance of Jesus as their Savior; that those who attend the services do not use the Spirituality generated in these services for the purpose intended; that most of the people who are inspired by these meetings hug that Spiritual experience to themselves and dismiss their whole thought of responsibility for others by saying, "Wasn't it a blessed meeting"; that if they had taken this new power and applied it to the task of persuading others to become Christians, then the meeting would have been much more successful.

From his personal experiences among the soldiers during the World War, Kernahan brings us further enlightenment:

> "The boys who were won to Christ by the personal contact method were much firmer in their decisions. They threw away their prejudices about

> religion and are open to a frank presentation, when we talked to them personally. They told us their problems, literally laid bare to us the most intimate secrets of their lives, when we sat by their sides or walked with them. Here we could deal with their one problem, or their several problems, in a definite and positive way--which obtained results."
>
> A. E. Kernahan.
> Chapter I.

Are we spending too much time, just to get a crowd? Would it not be better to go to the homes and uncover the religious aspirations and hungers of the individuals; question them about their local Christian responsibilities; get them to decide to accept Jesus Christ and His program for them in that community and in the world; and then, invite them to church? They should then have something to come for!

During the phenomenal growth of the church in the early years of the Christian era, the work was done by religious conservations in which one Christian talked to another, or at least to a few. As Jesus went about during the years of his ministry,

He not only preached to the people, but He also sat down with them and quietly explained to both individuals and small groups the riches of the Kingdom of God, for we have many records of His conversations with men and women when he explained to them the meaning and value of life; "in this way, He was able to woo and win them to whole hearted allegence." And with the disciples, far wider was the practice of meeting people in groups, in homes, sometimes in chapels or along the waysides, where the fundamental decisions of life were made under the influence of these men who knew God through Christ and who were able to interpret to needy hearts the realities of companionship with the Living Christ. So, Personal Evangelism is not a child of the twentieth century; it has been the most effective method of evangelism from the very first outreach of Christianity; but only today are we beginning to understand its full implications and enduring values. Twentieth century evangelism is not only the increase of Christ in the hearts of individuals, it is also the practice of Christ's method of evangelism, but through a twentieth century organized church for twentieth century Christian civilization.

> "The church, which concentrates on a definite program of Parish Evangelism in winning men and women to the fellowship of worship and service in the church of Christ, is following the method used by Christ and followed by His apostles. The church, whose pastor and people unite in a program of Parish Evangelism, will discover two things about the work of the church. It will find that the new members who come into the church through this natural and normal way, who have been led to the decision by those with whom they are to live and work, who are received by the pastor who is to be their leader through the days to come, that these new members readily enter into the fellowship of service and worship of the church with every element in favor of their remaining faithful to the church. The church will discover, also, that its own life is deepened and enriched through fellowship in fruitful service, and that there is, year by year, a growing efficiency in every department of its work."
>
> F. L. Fagley.
> Chapter I.

The whole trend today is in the direction of fewer churches, larger churches, and staff organization--each church headed by a pastor who is a specialist in his distinctive task, and who has associated with him specialists in religious education, young people's work, and such other programs as the

whole parish appears to need. For religious education we have developed a quite clearly defined program, with an ideal in which there is a trained director of religious education at the head of an extensive organization making use of a large number of volunteer workers selected and trained by the director for their special tasks. Also, we frequently have an employed clerical force for office detail work, employed leadership in music.

But the parish need for a program of personal service has, quite unreasonably, been unimportant enough to achieve its rightful place in the organized program of the church. We have left it largely to the pastor, or perhaps given him an assistant to releave him of his "bothersome drudgery". So often, it has been used in educational and other organizations as a necessary means to an ulteria end; social calls or sick visits to the members of a Bible class as a means to get them back to the class. We have failed to envision personal service as one of the great ways in which the Christian life is to be

lived, and as the fundamental method by which twentieth century evangelism is to be effective.

Of course, if personal work, personal serivce, personal evangelism, means as little as it does to many--either that a few persons speak to their friends in some meeting about the Christian life or that the pastor speaks to individuals in the course of his parish work about their Christian responsibilities--the absence of programed personal service is obvious. But if personal work means individual work for individuals, if personal service is making practical application of the teachings of the church through personal influence, and if personal evangelism is a conscious effort, either by pastor or people, to present the Gospel of Christ and the appeal to Christian living so as to meet the needs of the individual and show that individual what the Christian faith will mean to him, its important function in the life of the church through its program of service should be quite clear.
Let us vision the practical ideals in the working of such an evangelistic program of personal service.

> "Who shall lead the parish if not the pastor? At such a time, every pastor must seek first for Spiritual power, and then for such methods as will best vitalize that power in the great task for which he is commissioned. If he is like his Master, he is a lover of men, father and brother, shepherd and physician of souls. If he goes to battle against the world, the flesh and all evil, it is not to a charge or a single battle, but to a campaign that he must address himself. If he is wise, he is not after an audience but a congregation, not a crowd for an hour, but whom he undertakes to build up in their most Holy Faith. ... It is the part of wisdom for every pastor to supplement his own experience by that of others; to study carefully those plans and methods which have been honored of God and shown to be effective in producing the results for which his soul longed. It will broaden his outlook, and give him increasing confidence to undertake large and far-reaching results."
>
> C. L. Goodell.
> "Parish Evangelism."
> F. L. Fagley.
> Introduction.

But, if the pastor is to lead the church in a program of effective personal evangelism, if he is to have a congregation rather than an audience, if he is to build up their faith rather than have a crowd for an hour, and if both pastor and people are to broaden their outlook, undertaking large and far-

reaching results with increasing confidence, the parish program should include the following:

It should include a system of education--education of the general membership in its nature and values and education of individual workers for carrying out their particular work. Classes in the psychology and technique of personal work would do much for broadening the horizon, deepening the experience, and increasing the usefulness and joy of Christian service.

> "We shall see more of the immediate value in knowing the biography of a human soul, than in the geography of Palestine; more in knowing the keys to mental conflict that fruit in misconduct, than in the keys to some criptic Apocalyptic figure of things that may happen in the last time. We shall not cease to study our Bibles; we shall study them with a new relish as we find therein both inspiration and direction for helping people of our own generation out of their troubles into wholesome living."
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Chapter III.

Also, the parish program should include a constant study of the community to locate and diagnose

the needs. The names of a large number of men and women who ought to be reached, enough information about them to give workers many suggestions as to how to proceed in individual cases, familiarity with the community problems--these, and other findings, would prove their own worth. But this community study must necessarily be constant. It is never completed; for new needs, new difficulties, will constantly be arising as new people appear and new conditions develop.

But as a final fruition, the parish program should include consummation in tying up needy lives in helpful relations with those individuals or organizations from whom help and enrichment can be secured. yet, is that all?

> "The vital part of the ministry (of the parish program of personal evangelism) is the Spiritual message that enriches the life of the church. The evangelistic note which the ministry must sound should result in bringing conviction to the hearts of men, in revealing to them the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in leading them to accept this grace for themselves by entering into the life of the Spirit through Christ.

> Every pastor will have his own way of doing this, but woven through the fabric of the (parish program) must be a Spiritual appeal, wooing the hearts and minds of men."
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Chapter III.

In one church, good results were secured by a deaconess assigned to the church by the denominational authorities. When she went on to the field, she was not there to do the work for the people of the church, but to lead them in it. With a winsome personality, she won them to herself and to enthusiasm for the personal work in which she was to lead. But if the pastor does the leading, the work is more enriching for both the life of the church itself and for those who are served in helpfulness and achievement.

In another situation, a pastor trained in the meaning, value, and technique of personal work set up his program through the women's organization of the congregation. The women found great joy and manifested real helpfulness. In that particular case, the pastor usually made the contacts himself for the women, made most of the diagnoses, and directed the

service. What the women did in this way was a recognized part of the regular program of work in their society which they appreciated as of equal importance with their missionary gifts or educational programs. But if the work is important enough to call for a specific organization of both pastor and people working in cooperation in planning and achieving, the personal evangelism would be even more effective.

Perhaps the most effective method of setting up a program of personal service evangelism is for the pastor to select certain of his church members adults and young people on whom he can rely for service, those who have influence in the community as a result of their way of living and tact and kindly attitude toward others. When all are together, the pastor should present his ideals of individual work, just what he expects them to do, how to go about the work and what results to expect. He then should secure the consent of as many as will agree to make a study of the methods of personal work and to devote some time to this service for a limited period.

If this small group of pastor and personal workers will function in accordance with local conditions, both as a unit and as individuals, and if they will forecast their program and prepare their service of personal evangelism with the knowledge of twentieth century needs and with the Spirit of first century Christianity, twentieth century evangelism will bring the increase of Christ in the hearts of individuals and the Kingdom of God here on earth.

> "When we really get the vision of the Kingdom of God as destined to embrace the whole of the life of the people, and of our own churches as called and privileged to promote all this in their several areas, and of each member of our churches as likewise called and privileged to have a part in it, an organized program of consecrated skillful casework seems natural--inevitable."
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Chapter XII.

# Chapter V.

## Conclusions.

> "If to do were as easy as to know what were well to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces!"
>
> C. R. Zahniser.
> Preface.

> "The modern theology tells us that our theology should first come out of life; second, interpret life; third, return into life. This means for us in this connection; first, that what we may expect to know about any "sinner" we will learn from studying the life and situation of this particular sinful man; second, that we will try to interpret what we thus learn in the light of the scriptures and of the experiences of others; and third, that we will do this for the one purpose of helping this particular "sinner" into wholesome adjustments of his own life."
>
> Zahniser.
> Chapter III.

In brief, what have we learned about twentieth century evangelism? In summary, what may we conclude about the meaning and practice of Christian evangelism for the twentieth century?

I. Because of changing conditions under which men find themselves, because of changing needs which men feel, and because of changing knowledge, evangelism is in transition from an authoritarian dominion of Christianity to a friendly helpfulness of the Gospel of Jesus.

II. In order that there shall be a Gospel for every life, and in order that there shall be both better people in the world and a better world for the people to live in, evangelism must be practiced through helping individuals make their personal adjustments, both in their own lives and in a complex democratic society.

III. If Christianity is to increase Christ in the hearts of individuals, if it is to be helpful in the adjustments and achievements of life, and if it is to inspire more enriched personalities in a social Kingdom of God on earth, the program of evangelism in the church must be personal--winning results through individual contacts with individuals.

IV. The program of evangelism is a cooperation of pastor and people in a definite effort to enlarge and enrich Christianity in accordance with local conditions, community needs, and individual welfare.

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